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# A STUDY OF THE TRADITIONAL "VIRGIN MARY" IN THE LIGHT OF THE WORD

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## I.

ALIKE to Christendom and to the Mystical Body of Christ has the virgin-mother proved an individuality of striking interest. Prose and Verse have conspired to laud her charms, Tradition has haloed her with entrancing legends, Ecclesiasticism has dwelt lovingly and insistently upon her notable powers, prerogatives, and personality; while Art has enshrined her in the darkling shadows of monastic crypts, the sun-lit vistas of world-famed galleries, and on the wide-flung incensed spaces of towering cathedral walls.

Only momentary thought is required to realize that her direct maternal relation to The Master has sufficed to evoke an age-long tenderness of concept and a delicacy of comprehension that, beyond question, has served to exalt her to a commanding preëminence among women. Nor should be minimized the interesting fact that this very relationship has also served to stimulate the thoughtful study of philosophers, scientists, and theologians.

While freely admitting the utter futility of endeavoring to present an accurate composite view of Mary, nor yet of recording the protean interpretations of her person and personality that have tended to crystallize through the passing centuries, but have, of necessity, varied with the equation of each individual, whose contemplative mind has busied itself with this theme; yet it is submitted that the following summary, while doubtless failing to interpret the concept of any single mind, or of any ecclesiastic group, or of any nation, or of any century, will probably fairly outline the more significant opinions and impressions.

Mary, as customarily conceived, was a woman of pure

character, of good stock, of reverent mind; strongly maternal in type, with whole-hearted concentration in, and worship for, her Son, a concrete and significant exemplification of ideal wifehood and motherhood. Furthermore, in most minds, she is probably visualized as definitely beautiful in face and form, and in addition adorned with all the gracious charms of an abundant womanhood.

A very generous proportion of Christendom is led in its faith and its religious life by the dominating influence of ecclesiastics. To this group Mary, of supernatural origin, is seen clothed with supernatural powers, is the arbitress of destinies, the accepted mediatrix between humanity and The Throne, herself an appropriate object of worship.<sup>1</sup>

A presentation of the multitudinous Marys of legend, of tradition, and of myth, would serve but to confuse judgment, and lead us into the devious byways of a fruitless casuistry.

## II.

Difficult as is the task for the average mind to visualize an abstraction, or a personality, or an event long since buried in the limbo of the centuries; more difficult is it to phrase an intelligible explanation or discussion of such matters; and yet more difficult is the portrayal of such in concrete form. As contrast to those who have spoken or written of the virgin-mother (theologians as a rule) should be set those who convey their concepts by the ready avenue of the eye.

It requires but passing conversance to realize that a highly suggestive field for study has thus been developed by Art. Nor would the thought seem difficult of apprehension that the creations of artists should exhibit a fairly accurate display of current views regarding the personal-

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<sup>1</sup>It is probably a general opinion that Mary has been formally canonized by Rome, but a somewhat hurried survey of Butler, "Lives of Fathers, Martyrs and Other Principal Saints;" Baring-Gould, "Lives of the Saints;" Catholic Encyclopedia; Schaff-Herzog, "Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge," etc., etc., has failed to substantiate the impression—though a multitude of feasts and holy days, connected with Mary, are therein recorded.

ity and environmental setting of this historically interesting character.

Needless to remark that the present occasion is not suitable for an exhaustive analysis of the various schools, the influence of circumstance, the interpretations as engendered by either nationality or propinquity, nor the practically insoluble problem whether or not any given artist (or group of artists) possessed the Spirit-anointed eyes of the genuine Christian. Suffice it for the present purpose to view the problem along exceedingly simple and admittedly broad lines.

There is evidenced in the earliest records a tendency for the artist to portray the mother with her attention directed toward The Child, though she herself by virtue of relative size and position remains the larger and the dominant figure. As it is a fair assumption that the faith of the post-apostolic centuries would exhibit a comparative freedom from gross contamination and frank decadence, no surprise should be engendered by the reaction of Art to the existing religious (if not keenly spiritual) atmosphere of those days. The preponderant artistic influence was Byzantine, of scant aesthetic value; but outshining from its wooden formalism and obvious crudities is the attempt to focalize attention upon The Child. Byzantine characteristics continued to manifest themselves until well down into the 15th century, though by this time Bellini and others were able to introduce a measure of beauty in their paintings. With the onset of the Italian Renaissance was injected a marked increase of artistic power and grace. The voluptuous Madonnas of Raphael (Sistine,—Of the Chair,—Of The House of Alba,—In the Meadow, etc.) serve to accentuate the transition and foreshadow future tendencies.

By this time The Child was frankly secondary, the commanding maternal figure, garnished with regal draperies and environment, confronts the spectator from the eminence of an earthly throne, or the yet greater eminence of a celestial throne.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>One of the earliest specimens, 540 A. D., of the enthroned mother is found in a mosaic decorating the apex of the Cathedral of Parenzo (Austria), constructed by Bishop Euphrasius.

The gymnastics of ecclesiastic casuistry, by which had been determined the acceptability of the monstrous titles, "Queen of Heaven" and "Mother of God," and their incorporation in the current religious vernacular, had also stimulated a parasitic and servile Art to the production of multiplied and suitably gorgeous presentations of the erst-while peasant in her new and resplendent rôle.<sup>9</sup> It was

*In re* "Queen of Heaven" and "Mother of God:"

In justice to Papal Rome it is freely conceded that the responsibility of authorship of these phrase-titles lay not with the Roman hierarchy. For we find mention of the "Queen of Heaven" and her idolatrous practices made by Jeremiah (XLIV, 15-80), whose prophetic activity extended from 518 to 477 B. C. Nor does this ancient notation exhaust our knowledge of these associated titles, for study of pagan mythology shows that practically all of the conspicuous systems exhibit in varied and multitudinous guise the worship of a goddess-mother (both with and without a child); the which goddess is also the queen of the abode of the gods. A discussion of this interesting and important fact would, of itself, require a generous monograph. The *sons et origo* of ancient idolatry is to be found at Babylon, and the first "Queen of Heaven" and "Mother of God" was the deified Semiramis (paragon of beauty and supreme mistress of lust) and the first "child" was the deified Nimrod. After deification she became known as Rhea and became co-associated with her son, with the deification title of Nin. From Babylon the cult spread; so that we find Isis and Osiris (Egypt), Isi and Iswara (India), Aphrodite and Adonis (Greece), Venus and *Jupiter puer* (Rome); nor is the far East exempt, for Jesuit missionaries found the counterpart of the Madonna and her Child worshipped in Thibet and Japan; and in China she is seen under the name Shing Moo, the Holy Mother.

Probably the earliest genuine text of a Marian litany is that found in a 12th Century Codex of the Mainz Library ("Letania domina nostra Dei genitrice virginæ Maria; oratio valde bona; cottidie pro quacumque tribulatione recitanda est"). The following will serve as a specimen of the titles therein employed: "Sancta Maria, stirps patriarcharum, vaticinium prophetarum, solatium apostolorum, rosa martirum, predicatio confessorum, liliū virginum, ora pro nobis benedictum ventris tui fructum," etc., etc. A posterior Codex (late 13th—early 14th centuries) in the Library of St. Mark's, Venice, affords a more generous study of the Marian title, thus:

"Holy Mary, Mother and Spouse of Christ; Holy Mary, Mother Inviolatē; Holy Mary, Temple of the Holy Ghost; Holy Mary, Queen of Heaven; Holy Mary, Mistress of the Angels; Holy Mary, Stair of Heaven; Holy Mary, Gates of Paradise; Holy Mary, Mother of True Counsel; Holy Mary, Gate of Celestial Life; Holy Mary, Our Advocate; Holy Mary, Brightest Star of Heaven; Holy Mary, Fountain of True Wisdom; Holy Mary, Unfading Rose; Holy Mary, Beauty of Angels; Holy Mary, Flower of Patriarchs; Holy Mary, Desire of Prophets; Holy Mary, Treasure of Apostles; Holy Mary, Praise of Martyrs; Holy Mary, Glorification of Priests; Holy Mary, Immaculate Virgin; Holy Mary, Splendour of Virgins and Example of Chastity."

The title "Mother of God" seems to have been officially adopted

but part of the alchemic transmutation that a woman's simple grace should be largely submerged in the elaborate garnitures, the magnificent backgrounds, and the heterogeneous court of angels and martyrs, of saints and sinners, of hierarchs and beasts, of stars and clouds, with which it was deemed appropriate to invest her.

Surely it is a far cry from the Bethlehem stable and the Nazareth shop to the enthroned and enskyed presentments of Raphael, Titian, Veronese, Bellini and Giorgione.

While Southern artists usually garnished the mother's head with the nimbus, this in the North was frequently supplanted by a crown, which, though but another evidence of decadence from scriptural revelation, must be conceded as subtly harmonious with the "Queen of Heaven" myth. By this time the figure of the Madonna had assumed heroic size and generously voluptuous proportions; nor may it be denied that in not a few instances a frank coarseness in type was evidenced. But the enthroned and enskyed Queen was gradually to be displaced; and though such modernists as Bodenhausen, Defregger and Bouguereau have maintained a traditional treatment, yet the modernists, as a class, have reverted to the relative simplicity of earlier days. The pastoral setting is again employed and often merged into scenes of domestic type. Schongauer, Romano, Murillo, Rembrandt, Corregio and Lippi are found among the progenitors of this modern school. The virgin-mother, no longer in regnant poses and regal panoply, now exhibits herself in maternal guise; but she remains, as heretofore, the dominant figure.

With but the rarest exceptions all artists have endeavored to portray the mother as physically attractive. That all such portrayals do not of necessity invariably succeed, is partly due to the artist's personal equation, and partly due to the fact that most observers are frankly insular in preference, and thus fail to respond to heterologous types. This insularity of the observer is fully paralleled by the

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at the Council of Ephesus, 431 A. D. By the Second Council of Nicaea, 787 A. D., it was declared that veneration paid to her image passed on to herself, and that he who adored (*ho proskunōn*) the image adored the original.

insularity of the artist himself, for with remarkable regularity the type that has been commonly recorded has been that of his native soil. Tissot is one of the few that have been activated by a phylogenetic impulse, and that have endeavored to convey by their craft either the types or the ensemble of Palestine.

The paintings and statuary of the iconophile churches of today are, as a rule, of negligible esthetic, artistic, or spiritual value, but they continue to exhibit the supremacy of the mother whenever found in association with The Child.

Of more than passing interest is the fact that whereas in the world-famed galleries the modernists have introduced a substantial number of portrayals of the pastordomestic type, by contrast it to be noted that ecclesiastic welcome and sanction continue to be bestowed upon those exhibiting regal embellishment.

Furthermore, it would seem to be but a fair conclusion, that iconophile ecclesiasticism endorses the dominance, if not frankly the supremacy, of the mother whenever co-associated with The Child.

### III.

The foregoing sections would suggest the vast number of primrose paths of dalliance upon which the mind might journey far; likewise would they suggest the speculative maze wherein judgment would inevitably find itself fruitlessly circling. Fortunately, however, we are not restricted to the orientation of this field of luxuriant error and fantastic imaginings; for though it be true that we have no authentic fragment of either the body or the garments of the virgin-mother, we know not her home nor her sepulchre, nor have we first-hand portrait, nor statue, biography nor autobiography; yet accurate information is to be had for the seeking mind, and this, too, no further afield than the records of The Word.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>It is a matter of no inconsiderable interest that it seems to be quite freely admitted by Roman writers that the mass of Marian data (commonly associated with the teaching of Rome) is derived from either legend or apocryphal literature. Thus the Catholic

Amidst the shocking unrest and turmoil and misery of the period antedating and sequent to the Nativity (which in epitome strikingly foreshadowed current days) there was to be found, among the godly of Israel, a long cherished hope, and a spirit of eager expectancy for the fulfillment of age-long prophecies regarding the advent of the Messiah-King.

The place of His nativity had been foretold (Mic. v. 2), the lineage from which He should spring had been designated (Is. ix. 7), His titles had been announced (Is. vii. 14, ix. 6),<sup>5</sup> His virgin birth prophesied (Is. vii. 14),<sup>5</sup> His sojourn in Egypt recorded (Hos. xi. i), specific allusion to the character of His work had been made (Is. ix. 6, 7, xlii 1-4), and the imperative necessity of the God-Man had been affirmed in the ancient sentence of Jehovah pronounced in the midst of the Paradise of Genesis (Gen. iii, 14-15).<sup>6</sup>

Encyclopedia concedes that all information regarding either the names or lives of Mary's parents is apocryphal in source. Nor is more substantial foundation shown for her personal immaculate conception, nor for the doctrine of her personal impeccability. The latter seems to have been involuntarily sponsored by Augustine as follows: Though he had repeatedly asserted that she was born in original sin (*De Gen. ad lit. X. 18*) yet on an occasion when controverting Pelagius (that many lived free from sin) he stated, "the holy virgin Mary of whom, out of honour to the Lord, I wish no question to be made where sins are treated of—for how do we know what mode of grace, wholly to conquer sin may have been bestowed upon her, who was found meet to conceive and bear Him, of whom it is certain that He had no sin." Upon the *double entendre* of this dubious phrasing it would appear that Lombardus, and his school, developed their famous doctrine.

One is fairly overwhelmed by the vast number of apocryphal narratives bearing, directly or indirectly, upon Marianism. Probably the most important is the "*Protevangelium Jacobi*," and of those detailing legendary matters of post-ascension days, possibly "*De transitu Mariae*" (mid 4th Cent.) is of greatest interest. However, the question of relative importance is largely a matter of personal equation.

No frank tendency toward a definite cultus of the virgin was found before the closing years of the 4th century.

<sup>5</sup>In a footnote to Is. vii. 14, "a virgin" (Companion Bible), the scholarly Bullinger discusses—ha-'almāh (damsel) vs. bethulāh (virgin), and shows that while as "a sign" to Ahaz this damsel was an 'almāh, yet as a fulfilled prophecy, Matt. 1:21-23, it was in Mary—the παρθένος (bethulāh).

In connection with Is. vii. 14, should be studied vii. 3, viii. 3, 4, and x. 21.

<sup>6</sup>It should be a matter of more general recognition that God appears in The Word under a large number of titles, and quite a few



Brief though they be, yet from the O. T. allusions, whether direct or of typical significance, the evidence afforded is unmistakable that the mother should be purely human, and not in any sense of superhuman origin, or gifted with superhuman powers or attributes. Furthermore, it is highly significant that she is always seen in connection with, or on account of, and always subsidiary to, her Son.

It will be observed that the direct N. T. allusions to the virgin-mother outnumber those found in O. T.; and of these all save two are recorded in the Gospels. The following digest (page 82) is essentially complete, and in chronologic sequence.

There remain but two other notations—the first, Acts I. 12-14, records the presence of Mary in the early supplicatory prayer-group of post-resurrection days; while the second, Gal. IV. 4, records The Son as “made of a woman, made under the Law.”

Now if it be true that we have no credible evidence regarding the virgin-mother save that recorded in the Word, our task of studying her personality, and her reaction to her environment (in particular to the Person and Work of her Son) is rendered quite simple, and wholly divested from the necessity of laborious conning of ancient manuscripts, the deciphering of musty palimpsests, and the critical sifting of traditionary tales. Indeed the task, as thus self-delineated, is so elementary in type, and obviously so correct in principle and method that we are, perforce, afforded a significant rubric upon our spiritual comprehension, when we realize that figment and fancy have been swallowed with pious and unctious complacency, while the truth has been persistently ignored, though recorded for our instruction upon the page of Holy Writ.

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additional combinations thereof. Without a reasonable acquaintance with these, the student is deprived of the acquisition of important exegetic data. In this particular instance God is shown as Jehovah-Elohim. In the capacity of Elohim, God is revealed as The Creator, and mankind occupies the positional relationship of His creatures. From John I. 1-5 we gather that The Word was The Creator, and from John I. 14 we learn that The Word is one of the titles of The Redeemer. From this may be deduced the interesting fact that Jehovah-Elohim of O. T. is prophesying His own advent and mission, which was to be fulfilled in N. T.

INCIDENT, OCCASION, CONVERSATION	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
1. Gabriel to Mary.....	....	....	I. 26-36	....
2. Mary to Elizabeth.....	....	....	I. 39-56	....
3. Magnificat.....	....	....	I. 46-55	....
4. Espoused to Joseph.....	I. 18-25	....	....	....
5. With child "by the Holy Ghost".....	I. 18-25	....	....	....
6. "Joseph knew her not".....	I. 25	....	....	....
7. Birth—Bethlehem.....	....	....	II. 4-20	....
8. "Pondered in her heart".....	....	....	II. 19	....
9. Jerusalem—presents the Child.....	....	....	II. 22-39	....
10. Mother marveled.....	....	....	II. 33	....
11. Simeon to Mary.....	....	....	II. 34-35	....
12. Visit of Magi.....	II. 1-12	....	....	....
13. Flight into Egypt.....	II. 13-14	....	....	....
14. Return from Egypt.....	II. 19-23	....	....	....
15. Passover and The Temple.....	....	....	II. 41-50	....
16. The missing Child.....	....	....	II. 43-46	....
17. Reproach of mother.....	....	....	II. 48	....
18. "Understood not".....	....	....	II. 50	....
19. "Kept in her heart".....	....	....	II. 51	....
20. Marriage—Cana.....	....	....	....	II. 1-11
21. Mary speaks.....	....	....	....	II. 3-5
22. To Capernaum.....	....	....	....	II. 11-12
23. "Standing without".....	XII. 46-47	III. 31-32	....	....
24. "Who is My mother?".....	XII. 48-50	III. 33-35	....	....
25. "The Son of Mary".....	....	VI. 3-6	....	....
26. "Blessed the womb that bare Thee".....	....	....	XI. 27-28	....
27. "By the Cross".....	....	....	....	XIX. 25-27
28. "Woman, behold thy son".....	....	....	....	XIX. 26

The inspired notations, our sole authentic record, follow. Comment thereon has been made purposely brief.

Luke I. 26-36. (1).

The first notation of N. T. records the fact that in the sixth month (sequent to the Zachariah vision) Gabriel, direct messenger of God, appeared to Mary, a virgin (betrothed of Joseph) with the unique message: "Hail thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women. . . . Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end."

This is an exceedingly important passage, for upon it,—*"Et ingressus Angelus ad eam dixit: Ave gratia plena: Dominus tecum: Benedicta in mulieribus,"* is based largely, if not wholly, the Roman concept and teaching of the supremacy of Mary.

That Rome has always included erudite men within her fold is beyond question; but that such concept and teaching are made deducible from this passage reflects greater credit upon Roman hierarchical homogeneity than upon Roman scholarship; for it requires not the vision of anointed eyes to discern that such conclusions are based upon an inadequate foundation, in that neither *"gratia plena"* nor yet *"benedicta in mulieribus"* affords warrant for the doctrine of Marian supremacy.

There is no question that the Vulgate is of great interest and importance, but that the Greek texts merit stronger allegiance than does the Vulgate is the consensus of the majority of Protestant scholars. From the Greek the phrase "thou that art highly favoured," is seen to mean having been favoured, *i. e.*, graced, grace filled;—the source is obvious, for all spiritual grace is derivable solely from God. The same thought is conveyed in "accepted in the beloved," of Eph. I. 6. These two are the only N. T.

usages of this phrase-concept; and are clean-cut in their unfolded truth of individual insignificance, the supremacy of God, grace a gift of God, its bestowal not based upon individual merit, but an act according to the good pleasure of His holy will.

Nor does the second phrase, "blessed art thou among women," argue either intrinsic superiority or individualistic supremacy; for this likewise is obvious that the blessedness consists essentially in the gracious bestowal of the favor of God in her selection as the mother of the Incarnate Redeemer, and in her equipment for this unique and exalted privilege. An illuminating sidelight is thrown upon this second phrase (considered by many of crucial import) when we find that it is *wholly omitted* by the great critical texts of Tischendorf, Tregelles, Alford, Wescott-Hort, and the Revisers Greek. The phrase *does* occur in Luke I. 42, and it has been suggested that the former instance is an interpolation based upon the latter statement (orientation of this problem is not germane to the present study).

Luke I. 39-56 (2 and 3).

To the exultant salutation of Elizabeth there follows the response of Mary; a paean of joy, of praise, and of adoration; a forthstanding gem of womanly simplicity, of womanly eloquence, and of spiritual vision. Suffice it for the present to note that her self-humility is paralleled by, in truth overshadowed by, her lofty apostrophe to "God my Saviour," and the further thought that if the "God my Saviour" be hers, as stated by Mary, she was neither immaculately conceived, nor yet impeccable, for the Saviour is Saviour *only to sinners, i. e., to the lost.*

Matt. I. 18-25 (4, 5 and 6).

v. 18 records the begetting,—v. 25 the birth.' Joseph, desirous of obeying the Law, was confronted with the

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<sup>7</sup>The widely accepted tacit belief that "the Holy Ghost" (Third of the Trinity) was the progenitor of The Child Jesus is largely based on v. 18. The Greek, however, does not make this error for it shows, πνεῦμα ἁγίου, holy spirit (without the definitive article), i. e., power from on high—and thus the basic Fatherhood of the First Person of the Trinity remains unimpaired. This is one of

tragic dilemma of either handing over his betrothed to be stoned (Deut. XXII. 22), or handing her a bill of divorce (Deut. XXIV, 1). Either policy, though absolutely according to Law, would have played directly into the hands of the arch-enemy of Christ, Satan himself; for, humanly speaking, on the one hand The Child would have been slain, on the other hand He would have been proclaimed a bastard. By a wonderful God-given faith Joseph believed the angelic messenger, and by an equally wonderful obedience followed the divine command; thereby subjecting himself, in co-partnership with Mary, to the finger of scorn and the tongue of slander. Nor did his obedience stagger at full measure, for it is divinely recorded that "he knew her not 'till she had brought forth her first born Son."

Luke II. 4-20 (7 and 8).

The betrothed of Matt. I. 18 is now the married "wife" of Luke II. 5.<sup>a</sup> For the present no further comment is submitted upon the well-known details of the birth and its immediate sequellae, save that the notation of v. 19, "Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart" should be borne in mind, and weighed with the evidence that is yet to be developed.

Luke II. 22-39 (9, 10 and 11).

There follow the interesting details in the Temple courts—the presentation of The Child, the appearance of the notable Simeon and Anna, their lofty words of praise.

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52 instances in N. T. in which the Authorized Version leads the reader astray in that it designates as the Holy Spirit that which (without the definitive article) refers to power from on High, or some other *gift* of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>a</sup>We would seem to be warranted in the assumption that *the birth* of The Child was in no wise aided by either physician or midwife, for the phrase "*she brought forth her first born Son,*" is highly suggestive of an act wholly divested of human intervention. If this be true the mind will readily gravitate to yet another noteworthy fact in that *the death* of the Lord Jesus Christ (though sought by Jew and Gentile alike, the coveted goal of Jerusalem, Rome and The Pit) was actually accomplished by neither human malevolence nor Satanic power; for at the supreme moment, the very apex of the Ages, He handed over, of His own volition and in the plenitude of His own power, His spirit into the hands of His Father.

There are two significant facts brought out in this passage. First, the uncleanness of the mother, the days of purification, and the offerings incident thereto, direct our thought to Lev. XII. 1-8; therein is to be noted both a burnt-offering and a sin-offering, and not until the priest had offered both was the mother again levitically "clean." It is inconceivable that a woman, the product of an immaculate conception, and also impeccable, could be levitically "unclean," and require both a burnt offering and a sin-offering and the intermediation of a priest. That these were essential, and resorted to in compliance with the Law, is conclusive that the virgin-mother differed in no essential from other women. The second is found in v. 33, "And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him." Surely it is needless to comment upon this illuminating disclosure of their befogged and wholly inadequate comprehension of either Himself or His mission.

Matt. II. 1-12 (12).

The scene of this episode, contrary to current concept, was Nazareth.<sup>9</sup> It is obvious that the worship of the distinguished visitants was wholly directed to The Child, "they worshipped Him." Divinely guided through the toilsome way, they found abiding satisfaction in naught else until privileged to make adoring obeisance in the presence of The Child. For Him the quest, for Him the treasures, for Him the worship, yea, for Him alone.

Matt. II. 13-23 (13 and 14).

This record exhibits the fact that the phrase "the young Child" is employed six times; "the young Child and His mother" four times; and that in each usage of the latter phrase "the young Child" *always precedes* "His mother." This becomes significant when we observe that the divine

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<sup>9</sup>Matt. II. 1-13 occurs between Luke II. 39 and 40. Observe II. 39, "they returned to Nazareth;" the Magi visited Him in "the house," Matt. II. 11 (of Nazareth) not in the stable of Bethlehem. Evidently from Nazareth, therefore, "they departed into their own country another way." From Nazareth the Family went to Egypt, and from Egypt again returned to Nazareth, Matt. II. 20-23.

messenger delivering divine messages so phrases it twice (13 and 20); and that the remaining examples (14 and 21) are likewise so phrased in the divine record.

Luke II. 41-51 (15, 16, 17, 18 and 19).

The Child now, as "a Son of the Law," is seen making His prescribed entry into the superb courts of the world-famed Herodian Temple, the occasion, the annual Paschal celebration. As elsewhere shown this Temple episode is pregnant with matters of supreme import.<sup>10</sup> It should be observed that The Child tarried in Jerusalem, and that Joseph and His mother knew not of it. Their easy indifference to His whereabouts extended over a full day's journey before a search was made. After three days they found Him in the Temple, where Mary reproached Him for a situation made possible by their own lack of proper oversight.

Of the highest significance is her statement "*Thy father and I have sought Thee.*" For notwithstanding that Joseph, under the strictest of legalism, would have been held to have occupied this purely formal relation, the actual net result of the mother's statement in the hearing of "the Doctors of the law" is that with one breath she potentially denies the divine paternity of The Child and substitutes therefor the paternity of a man. The following is submitted for thoughtful consideration:

It is recorded in Matt. I. 24-25, "Then Joseph . . . did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife; and *knew her not* till she had brought forth her first born Son." No one knew of this obediential abstinence better than Mary herself; with its inevitable exclusion of Joseph from the office of procreative paternity. Nor is the extreme gravity of her public statement mitigated when we further realize that *of the entire human race Mary herself was the only one that was able to bear first hand, personal, and humanly authoritative testimony to the divine origin of her Son.*<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Sharpe, N. W.: "A Message of Grace to be Found in Luke II. 49, My Father's Business," BIBLIOTHECA SACRA, April, 1920.

<sup>11</sup>In the light of this Temple episode is it to be construed as a mere coincidence that the people of Nazareth (His home town)

If we hesitate to accuse Mary of being the uninfluenced sponsor of the stupendous lie involved in substituting Joseph as the father of her own Son, we are forced to adopt the equally disastrous other horn of the dilemma and assume that she spoke without thoughtful weighing of her words, that she employed the current vernacular, and that in so permitting herself this liberty she betrayed her own abysmal ignorance, or indifference, to the supreme importance of the establishment, beyond peradventure, of His divine paternity and its direct bearing not only upon the Person but also upon the mission of The Redeemer; *for upon this single fact depended the efficacy of the plan of Salvation for the entire human race.*

There is wide-spread ignorance among Christians regarding the implacable conflict waged by Satan (the superb Lucifer of Isa. XIV, the anointed Cherub of Ezek. XXVIII., the dazzlingly resplendent Nāchāsh of Gen. III.) throughout the Ages, against the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ; likewise concerning his impious aspiration to the Throne of the Son of God.

With what profound satisfaction do we greet the decisive and dogmatic repudiation and rebuke conveyed in the reply of The Child.<sup>12</sup>

John II. 1-11 (20 and 21).

It is apparent that the virgin-mother "was there," before the arrival of Jesus (now in His full manhood) and His disciples. These oriental marriage feasts, lasting fre-

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were shortly to express their astonishment in the question, "Is not this Joseph's Son?" (Luke IV. 22). Furthermore this would seem to be the last mention of Joseph. Whether he died during the adolescent period of The Lord, or whether though living, further notation was purposely suppressed by God, is not determinable. But in either event this divine erasure of him from the subsequent inspired records, following thus abruptly upon the Temple incident and the public linking of his name, as father, to The Child, is highly suggestive.

<sup>12</sup>Clear distinction is to be made between The Master's repudiation and rebuke of the sinful attitude and testimony of His mother on this occasion, and His severance of relation which later occurred (this, too, will be oriented in its appropriate place). His rejoinder in the Temple may well be considered in the light of the sentence of the learned Bengel, "Non spernit matrem, sed antepōnit Patrem."



quently a full week, would be seriously marred by a wine shortage. Such occurred in this instance. Quite abruptly "the mother of Jesus"<sup>13</sup> indicated the exhausted supply to her Son. This act from any other mother and to any other Son, would be devoid of censurable significance, but not so here; for to dictate, either by word or act, a course of policy to be followed by The Omniscient One is wholly and invariably unwarranted. The reply of the Son is a rebuke, gentle, patient, kind, but unquestionably a rebuke.<sup>14</sup>

But she fails to grasp the situation; again she "understood not the saying which He spake." For now she pursues her policy by issuing orders to the servants (*in the residence of her host*). It is highly significant that these two are the last recorded utterances of the mother.

#### John II. 11-12 (22).

"This beginning of miracles" (v. 11) should be studied in connection with "mine hour" (v. 4); quite evidently marking an important epoch in the Lord's ministry in that it "manifested forth His glory." Though 450 years had elapsed since the Daniel deliverance (the last miracle wrought for the instruction of Israel) yet the record shows that a measure of faith still survived, for "His disciples believed on Him."

The forcible figure, polysyndeton (of v. 12) which stresses the members of the group that journeyed to Capernaum (including His mother) but renders the omission of her name among those that "believed on Him" (v. 11) the more saddening.

#### Matt. XII. 46-50. Mark III. 31-35 (23 and 24).

By studying both accounts conjointly great light is thrown upon one of the darkest pages of this history. The

<sup>13</sup>Never termed Mary in John; this to be recalled in later protocol upon John XIX. 26-27. There is no Scriptural warrant for either "Mother of the Lord," or "Mother of God." There are two instances in which The Master addressed His mother by title, and the word used was "Woman."

<sup>14</sup>The word "woman," of itself, conveys neither rudeness, censure, nor humiliation. Rather is it one of respect; most nearly akin to Madam, of today.

Master is now, more or less constantly, encompassed by His enemies who, out of utter unbelief, demand "signs," and enter into secret "council against Him how they might destroy Him." Upon the outskirts of the malevolent throng appear "His mother and His brethren" (of Matt.), "His friends," *i. e.*, kinsfolk (of Mark). In both Matthew and Mark we find that they "stood without" (in the typology of The Word always suggestive of alienation, and frequently of frank enmity); in this instance, at the very least, indicative of absolute lack of identification with either His Person, His message, or His work.

"Desiring to speak with Him" (Matt.), the presumptive reason for their presence and attitude, is made transparently clear by Mark III. 21, "they went out to lay hold on Him; for they said He is beside Himself."<sup>16</sup>

This unspeakably shocking charge of insanity, and an undisguised effort "to lay hold on Him," and thus in either instance (in so far as might lie within human power) frustrate both the truth of His divine testimony and the liberty of His Holy Person, met a prompt, a stern, an irrevocable response. "But He answered and said unto him that told Him, 'Who is My mother? and who are My brethren?' And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples and said, 'Behold My mother and My brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of My Father, Which is in Heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother.'"

So far as is known from The Word, this tremendous and all-illuminative indictment of the spiritual darkness into which His mother and brethren had progressed, closes the family relationship; anticipating and accentuating with startling vividness and intimate poignancy the retroactive statement of John, made concerning the whole Jewish people, "*He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.*"

Mark VI. 3-6 (25).

Further evidence is herewith offered that neither His mother, nor brethren, nor sisters, defended Him from

<sup>16</sup> *μαίνομαι* is found also in Acts XXVI. 24 (the only other occurrence); they alike mean to be mad, to be insane.

the materialistic calumnies of His enemies. The conclusive statement of the Lord Himself is most suggestive,—  
“A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among *his own kin*, and *in his own house*. . . . And He marveled because of their unbelief.”<sup>10</sup>

Luke XI. 27-28 (26).

On an occasion when addressing His disciples and a gathered throng,” a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice and said unto Him, ‘Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps which Thou hast sucked.’ ” That this characteristically outspoken orientalism contained a subtle menace, and was not permitted to pass as mere feminine tittle-tattle, is evidenced by the fact that The Lord did not ignore it, but promptly crushed the insidious danger that lurked therein. For it is plain, to the thoughtful mind, that on the one hand there was thus furnished a tangible basis for subsequent frank Mariolatry, and on the other hand the substantial implication that from His mother He had derived the notable powers, by the which this woman herself had been enthralled. Observe, by contrast, not only the divine skill by which He extracted the deadly menace from her words, but also the lofty vision outlined in His reply, “Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.”

Nor need we hesitate to realize (in the light of the steady decline of faith, vision and belief of the virgin-mother, and her grievous alienation from Her Son and His work) with what profound regret The Master was unable, on this occasion, specifically to include her who had borne Him, her who had suckled Him, among those upon whom He now bestowed the accolade of “Blessed.”

Nor should we blind our eyes to the fact that this brief record of Luke is both preceded and immediately followed

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<sup>10</sup>It is well known that the “unbelief” “of his own country,” which caused The Master to marvel, steadily spread until the entire nation (then resident within the Land) became gravely infected. It is, however, probably not so well recognized that the alienation and unbelief of His family group, together with His mother’s policy toward His paternity, logically led onward to the scantily veiled Pharisaic taunt of bastardy, as recorded in John VIII. 19 and 41.

by matters Satanic, the petulant and insistent demands for a "sign," the challenge that He was allied with, and operating through, demons—the picture of Israel portentous with the darkness of unbelief, riddled by rabbinical hypocrisies, ripening daily for an impending and catastrophic judgment.

John XIX. 25-27 (27 and 28).

It would seem highly probable that Joseph was now long since dead, the First-Born of Mary is hanging on the Cross, His pallid blood-stained form dimly outlined in the midst of the pall of darkness that had quenched the blaze of the noontide Syrian sun. In utter helplessness has gathered a handful of women, who stand fearfully gazing upon the anguished sufferer.

What was passing through their minds we can but imagine. What was passing through the agonized mind of her who had at first joyously acclaimed Him, had later borne Him, and yet later had turned from Him, may well have been accentuated by the remembered prophecy of the aged Simeon, "Yea a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also." Surely we would not ruthlessly intrude upon the crushing grief of an erring spirit; tortured in the awakening consciousness of committed sin, agonized in the vouchsafed vision of the sentient Truth.

Look, Mary! Forgettest thou that sin-cursed Israel gained life by gazing upon the uplifted brazen serpent in ancient days? Look, Mary, for thy dear Son's sake look on Him! pray for pardon! haste thee! time flies! life ebbs! in anguish He awaits thy broken cry.

Silence and darkness; yea an ever increasing darkness.

And presently He turned His thorn-crowned Head; Oh! marvelous compassion; Oh! wondrous grace! and lo! He looked on her.

Unthinkable anguish His, yet thought He of her; the unspeakable burden of a world's infamy pressed Him beyond measure, yet planned He for her; . . . the loved disciple stood near; "Woman, behold thy son," . . . "Behold thy mother."

Thus fully and finally did He divest Himself of all

earthly ties, all human relationships; and forth He fared into the ever-increasing darkness of supreme isolation, the stricken Lamb of God.

**"ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SABACHTHANI."  
"IT IS FINISHED."**

So passed Mary from Calvary to the household of John. She is not seen at His death, not seen at His sepulchre, not seen at His empty tomb, not seen at His post-resurrection trysts, nor yet at His ascension.

But in Acts I. 12-14 it is recorded that she (with His brethren) was in the supplicatory prayer-group of the upper room in Jerusalem.

Of her later life, and of her death, when, where, how, we have no scriptural knowledge. Enshrouded in the flimsiest of legendary myths, she fades from our vision into an all-enveloping oblivion.

Not so with Him; the Syrian sepulchre holds Him not, nor does oblivion efface Him from the hearts of His own; for clad in His resurrection Body, and vested in the plenitude of His power as the Son of God, the glorified Lord is again seated on The Throne.

#### IV.

#### SUNT LACRYMAE RERUM.

From this study of Mary may be formulated the following:—

1. There is no scriptural evidence that would warrant belief in (a) supernatural birth, (b) supernatural powers, (c) supernatural prerogatives, (d) personal impeccability, (e) an "assumption," either *antemortem* or *postmortem*.
2. There is no scriptural evidence that would warrant worship; nor belief in her authorization, or in her efficacy, as either arbitress or mediatrix.
3. Save for the fact that God graciously selected her (in itself an act of pure grace) to be the mother of the Incarnate Redeemer, she differed in no essential from other women of her time, or of all time.
4. Notwithstanding the fact that Mary was the sole

individual of the entire human race who could have borne first-hand, personal and absolutely conclusive testimony that the Father of her Son was God Himself, the Scriptures afforded no evidence that, either in public or in private, she ever so testified.

5. The zenith of her faith and spiritual vision was attained before the birth of The Child.

6. From which pre-natal zenith there is recorded a steady decline in faith and vision which reached its nadir when publicly charging The Lord with being "beside Himself," and on the same occasion endeavoring "to lay hold on Him."

7. Following which, The Lord put aside both His mother and His brethren; substituting therefor "Whosoever shall do the will of My Father Which is in Heaven."

8. The only evidence recorded in The Word that would afford strength to the belief that Mary was a saved woman is found in her own confession of faith as phrased in the pre-natal Magnificat.

9. At the last recorded meeting of The Master and His mother (when He was hanging on The Cross); there is no evidence that she sought pardon for her unbelief and alienation from her Lord. In silence she viewed His sufferings, in silence received His gracious provision for her future care and comfort, in silence was she led by John from Golgotha and the last agonized hours of her uplifted Son and Saviour.

10. All matters pertaining to Mary apart from the records afforded by the Scriptures, are apocryphal (*de facto* non-scriptural and unscriptural) and as such are not worthy of credence.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>The following clipping from the newspaper report of the last May Day sermon of a distinguished Roman prelate of great personal popularity affords significant evidence that Marian errors (as tested by The Word) continue to be taught:

"For the modern woman to take such a stand as this, someone will say, is a long distance, is quite a departure from the Blessed Mother. Yes, there are many things today that do not stand that test. At the same time this is the world in which we live; these are the times in which we have to do what is ours to do. If the woman of today goes out, keeping faith in God in her heart, and a sense of duty where nature and God has placed it; if she faces the world, whether it smiles or sneers or cajoles, and is true to

V.

But though it be true that the virgin-mother of The Word was but a woman among women; whose memory may be cherished not for a fanciful intrinsic superiority, but rather that, by the grace of God, she was selected to house and nourish for a brief season The Incarnate Word; if the actual woman, in comparison with the pseudonymous "Queen of Heaven" and "Mother of God" be found to shrivel before our eyes, not so with her Son Our Lord.

The most intensive research will but serve to substantiate the records of His unfaltering progress, of His irresistible supremacy.

"He is before all things, and by Him all things consist, and He is the Head of the Body, the Church; Who is the Beginning, the First-Born from the dead; that in all

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her trust, then all will be well, and we can still continue to celebrate Mary's name and Mary's virtue, still have our Queen of the May, Blessed Mother."

In the first part of his address, the Archbishop told of the Scriptural references to the Blessed Virgin Mary as one "all fair, to be as the sun and the moon and the stars. She it was who went with our Lord to the wedding feast; for her He wrought His first miracle; she followed Him on the way that led to Calvary, and stood beside His cross and visited the open tomb. The Mother of the Blessed Savior, was by His last words given to us as our mother when Christ hanging on the cross said to St. John, 'Son, behold thy mother.'"

Note the following:

1. *Scriptural references to the Blessed Virgin Mary as "one all fair to be as the sun, and the moon and the stars" (?)*.
2. *"for her He wrought His first miracle" (?)*.
3. *"She followed Him on the way that led to Calvary" (?)*.
4. *"and visited the open tomb" (?)*.
5. *"The Mother of the Blessed Saviour was by His last (?) words."*
6. *"Given to us as our Mother" (?)*.
7. *"When Christ . . . said to St. John, Son (?) , behold thy mother."*

Investigation of the somewhat odd title "Queen of the May" shows that it was the outgrowth of the work of the Jesuits who allotted the entire month of May as a season consecrated for special honors to be paid the Virgin Mary. This arose toward the end of the 18th century in Italy, as an ecclesiastic counter to sundry irreligious spring festivals, introduced as a result of the French Revolution, which spread through France, Belgium, Austria and Germany. Pius VII commended this work of the Jesuits in a brief and attached numerous indulgences thereto.

things He might have the preëminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell."

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

With what rapt eagerness do we anticipate the day of His acknowledged preëminence, and with what intensified longing do we await the mighty pæan of universal adoration:

"And I beheld and heard the voice of many angels round about the Throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." And every creature which is in Heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, "Blessing and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him That sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." And the four living creatures said, "Amen." And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever."

**"SURELY I COME QUICKLY. AMEN."**

**"EVEN SO. COME, LORD JESUS."**